

SAWMILLS

Sawmills, like topsy, grew quickly in the early days of Midway. The need for lumber was urgent and the settlers were grateful for any amount that could be produced.

Because of the urgency for lumber, and the rapidity with which mills were built, it is difficult to know which was the "first" sawmill in Midway. For this reason, this account lists no one owner as "first."

An early operator was Father Mills of Provo. Sidney Epperson wrote in his journal about Father Mills as follows: "Mr. Huber states that Father Mills wheeled tools in a wheel barrow from Provo and located a sawmill here in the upper settlement on Snake Creek. At night he locked himself in a box as protection from bears and snakes."

Peter Shirts (Shurtz) had a mill on Snake Creek which contained an old style "up and down saw." He operated the mill only a few years and then sold it in 1864 to Henry Coleman Sr., who ran the mill for some time. Mr. Coleman employed John H. Van Wagoner as an assistant.

John Watkins also operated a sawmill, but located it on Deer Creek. Most of these mills were water-powered, though some utilized steam power in later years.

Most of the logs for the sawmills were hauled by horses or ox teams. Most loggers preferred oxen since they were slow, steady and not easily excited.

Moroni Blood was another sawmill operator. He was able to produce smooth lumber with a planer that he made himself. Other owners and operators included Ephraim Hanks, David Van Wagoner, William Howard, Henry Alexander, John Huber and Jacob Buehler.

